

THE HISTORICAL VALUE OF THE PATRIARCHAL NARRATIVES.

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Since the birth of the sciences in the nineteenth century, knowledge has been revolutionized and enlarged in every department. The effect of the creation of the historical and social sciences is as marked in this respect as that of the natural sciences. The account which the records and traditions of a country give of its history is found to begin with mythical stories, which gradually give place to legends and later emerge into sober history attested by documents, which, if not contemporary, date from a time so near to the events, that their testimony, when tested by general considerations, may be accepted. The scientific method applied to ordinary history is generally accepted quietly by the public, which is usually grateful for the clearer vision of past events which it affords.

It has been inevitable, that in the general progress of knowledge the scientific method should be applied to all existing records, sacred as well as to so-called profane. A part of the movement of modern knowledge consists, accordingly, of the application of the scientific method, generally known as the higher criticism, to the records in the Bible. The application of this method has resulted in the division of scholars into three camps: (1) there are the sincere, conscientious, open-minded, reverent scholars, who believe in the scientific method, who see that the Biblical records cannot be rightly exempted from scientific treatment, and who go about the work with reverence and sanity; (2) there are the reactionaries, who are unable to believe that any Biblical narrative can ever have had any other significance than that which they have always attached to it, and who spend their efforts endeavoring to prove, often by the flimsiest arguments from supposed archaeology, that every Biblical narrative must

be taken by the historian at its face value; (3) there is the mythological, or pseudo-scientific school, which has become enamored of the scientific method from afar, but has never undergone the training in judgment necessary to the application of scientific principles. The members of this school fall into two groups. There are those who, like Winckler, dissolve Solomon and everything before him into forms of Babylonian myths, while others, like Jensen and Zimmern, resolve most of the Biblical characters into myths. Under Jensen's touch every important character of the Old Testament and Apocrypha, as well as Jesus and Paul, become simply forms of the myths of the Gilgamesh epic. In view of the division of scholarship into these three camps, it is clear that a scientific student of history must take his stand with the first group. He cannot refuse to use the scientific method upon sources simply because they are sacred, nor can he exercise the liberty of dissolving into myth events attested by documents that are nearly contemporary with the events described.

The historical student of the sacred records finds, perhaps, his most difficult task the proper appraisal of the patriarchal narratives. Scientific criticism has shown that the records of these narratives have been drawn verbatim from three documents, the earliest of which dates from the ninth century B.C. and the latest from the middle of the fifth pre-Christian century. The demonstration of this is so convincing that it has won the consent of nearly all the scientific experts. There is probably no hypothesis concerning any modern science which commands so nearly the assent of all who can rightly be called experts in the subject as the so-called Graf-Wellhausen hypothesis of the origin of the Pentateuch. The public is sometimes deceived by the cries of those whose hopes are greater than their knowledge; but were the Graf-Wellhausen hypothesis a person, it might adopt the words which Mark Twain is said once to have cabled from Europe to a friend: "The report of my death is greatly exaggerated." The historical student of the patriarchal narratives must, then, take the Graf-Wellhausen hypothesis as his starting point. But let him follow the sound historical maxim and prefer the testimony of the earliest document, he is still in perplexity, for the oldest document, the so-called J document, is at least

three hundred years later than Moses. It is as far removed from Moses as the translators of the Authorized Version are from us, and further removed from Abraham than we are from Columbus and Martin Luther.

The historian may obtain a clue to guide him in his perplexity from a study of Genesis, ch. 10. For example, Gen. 10: 6 states that the sons of Ham were Cush, Mizraim, Put and Canaan. Cush here is the Egyptian *Kesh*, or Nubia. Mizraim is simply the Hebrew word for Egypt. Put is the *Punt* which figures so largely in Egyptian history—the country to the far south whence so many expeditions were sent and from which myrrh, ivory and pigmies were brought. Canaan is the well-known tribe or group of tribes from which the Phœnicians were developed, which also inhabited Palestine and gave it one of the names by which it is still called. It is clear that these names represent, not individuals, but personified tribes or nations. Take Egypt, for example. We now know the outlines of its history back to about 5000 B.C. At that time it consisted of forty-two distinct tribes, who lived so long in separation from one another that their animal totems persisted as the representatives of the gods of the different nomes down to the Roman period. Perhaps as early as 4000 B.C. these nomes, often at war with one another, had been united into the two kingdoms of upper and lower Egypt, but these were not united into a single monarchy until the time of Mena, about 3400 B.C. It is simply impossible that these forty-two tribes were descended from one man. Their gods, customs, sacred animals, and warlike emblems were all different. The further back we push our knowledge of Egypt, the more its constituent parts ramify into a congeries of unrelated atoms. It is only from the point of view of later times that it can be spoken of as one entity. The Biblical writer has accordingly personified a nation. What can be proved for Egypt can also be proved in lesser degree for Nubia.

If now other parts of the chapter be explored the names of many nations and countries appear. Gomer (v. 2) is the *Gamir* of the Assyrians, the Cimmerians of the Greeks; Madai is the Medes; Tubal and Meshech, the tribes *Tabalī* and *Mushkī* of the Assyrian

inscriptions. Javan is the *uv* of *ʾoves*, the Ionians. Elisha (v. 4) is the Alashia of the El-Amarna letters, or the Island of Cyprus; Kittim, the *Kiti* or *Kition*, on that island. Tarshish is Tartessos, the Phœnician mining and trading camp in Spain. Similarly in v. 22 Elam, Asshur and Aram are clearly the names of well known countries. In v. 26 most of the persons mentioned are known to be tribes or towns in south Arabia. In v. 15 it is stated that Canaan begat Zidon. Zidon is the city. Its name means "fishing." The name was not derived from a man, but from an industry.

We derive from this chapter, then, partly composed of J material (ninth century,) and P material (fifth century) the general principle that patriarchal names are probably not personal names, but are personified tribes, nations, or places. This is in accord with modern Arabian custom. The Arabs make alliances with other tribes under the fiction of kinship, and then to justify the supposed kinship trace their descent from a common ancestor.¹ In combining the personifications of two documentary sources in Genesis 10 confusion has, in at least one case, resulted. To the J writer (v. 8) the Cush who begat Nimrod was the *Kash* of the Babylonian inscriptions, *i. e.*, the Kassites or Cossaeans, who, entering Babylonia from the East, conquered it about 1750 B.C. and established a dynasty that ruled for 576 years. To the P writer of v. 6 Cush was Nubia, as already pointed out. The combination of these narratives by a later editor has made the two Cushes appear to be the same, so that some interpreters, not recognizing the difference, feel compelled to claim that the Assyrians are descended from a Hamitic race.²

We are, then, on safe historical ground, if we assume that at least a part of the patriarchal narratives consists of tribal history narrated as the experiences of individual men. To assume that all patriarchal story is tribal history, would be to create for ourselves new difficulties. When once a man, or a supposed man, has caught the popular imagination, tradition frequently attaches to his name

¹ Cf. Sprenger, "Geographie Arabiens" and "Lectures and Essays of W. Robertson Smith," 461. The position set forth in the text is not new. Many scholars have taken it.

² See Kyle, "The Deciding Voice of the Monuments in Biblical Criticism," 106.

stories, which were originally told of others. This could, if it were necessary, be illustrated by many examples, but it is unnecessary to occupy space to prove that which is familiar to every investigator of history or legend.

In applying the principle of interpretation drawn from Genesis, ch. 10, it is convenient to begin with the narratives connected with the twelve sons of Jacob. These correspond to the twelve tribes of Israel, and are probably simply personifications of those tribes. These sons are divided by the narratives into four groups, which are said to be respectively the offspring of four mothers. It is natural to suppose that, if these narratives represent tribal history, that there was an alliance between the tribes which composed each group before the groups themselves were formed into a union. Two of the groups are said to be the offspring of full wives of Jacob. These probably joined in an alliance with each other earlier than the two groups which are said to be descended from Jacob's concubines. In Jacob's marriages, then, and the stories of the birth of his children we probably have an outline of the history of the formation of the confederacy of the twelve Israelitish tribes. The nucleus of this confederacy was the tribes which counted their descent from Leah, viz: Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Zebulon. These were the original tribes of Israel. Later were born the sons of Rachel; *i. e.*, the Rachel tribes came into the confederacy after the other six existed as a definite group. The name Leah means wild-cow; the name Rachel, ewe.³ It has accordingly been suggested that these were simply the animal symbols of the tribes, and that the Leah tribes were cow boys and the Rachel tribes sheep raisers. Others hold that they were not economic, but totemistic, symbols. Whichever alternative is adopted, the interpretation of Leah and Rachel which makes them the symbols of the intertribal alliances is most probable. The application of the name Joseph to two of these tribes, for reasons which will be mentioned later, was probably not made until after the settlement in Palestine. Again the tribe of Benjamin was not differentiated from the other Rachel tribes until after the settlement in Canaan. Benjamin originally

³ Delitzsch, "Prolegomena," 80. W. R. Smith, "Kinship," 2d ed., 254.

meant "sons of the south" or "southerners," and was given them because they were the southernmost of the Rachel folk. This southern position they occupied in Palestine, but could hardly have held as a nomadic tribe. The tradition that Benjamin is the youngest of Jacob's sons is a recollection of the late development of the tribe.

Similarly, the name Joseph seems to have been attached to the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh after the settlement in Canaan. The name itself has had an interesting history. A Babylonian business document of the time of the first dynasty of Babylon (2225-1926 B.C.) had for one of its witnesses *Yashub-ilu*,⁴ or Joseph-el. Thothmes III, who conquered Palestine and Syria between 1478 and 1447 B.C., records as one of the places which he conquered in Palestine *Ya-sha-p'-ra*,⁵ which Eduard Meyer many years ago recognized as Joseph-el. This equivalence is doubted by W. Max Müller, but is, so far as I can see, possible. How did the name of a Babylonian man become attached to a Palestinian city? There was at the time of the first dynasty frequent intercourse between Mesopotamia and Palestine. Documentary evidence of this will be cited below in connection with Abraham. Is it too much to imagine that a Joseph-el migrated, and that his name became attached to a Palestinian city? Not only have we in our own country many places named for men, but modern Palestine affords an example of a village that lost during the nineteenth century its name, *Karyet el-'Ineb*, and substituted for it the name of a famous sheik, *Abu Ghosh*.⁶ If in some such way Joseph-el made its way into Palestine and Rachel tribes afterward settled in the region, the shortened form of the name, Joseph, might naturally become the name of their supposed ancestor.

The principle of interpretation gained from Genesis 10 compels us to suppose that the name Joseph came in in some such way, for in the historical period no tribe of Joseph appears. If the investi-

⁴ "Cuneiform Texts, etc., in the British Museum," II., 23, 15.

⁵ Mittheilung der Vorderasiatische Gesellschaft, 1907, p. 23. Müller thinks it equivalent to *Yeshub-el*, "God dwells." The Babylonian might also be so interpreted. The phonetic equivalence between Babylonian and Hebrew points rather to *Joseph-el*, and the Babylonian form may account for the Egyptian spelling.

⁶ See Baedeker's "Palästina," 1910, p. 16.

gator is forced to this conclusion, how are the vivid narratives of the personal fortunes of Joseph to be accounted for?

The archæological discoveries of recent years have made it probable that the Joseph tribes alone were concerned in the Egyptian residence and bondage.⁷ The stele of Merneptah,⁸ to whom all Biblical indications point as the Pharaoh of the Exodus, clearly shows that Israel, or the Leah tribes, were already in Palestine. The fact that the Ephraimite document, E, recalls as the Judæan document J does not, the revelation of the name Yahweh,⁹ and that the ark of the covenant was afterward preserved in an Ephraimite shrine,¹⁰ point in the same direction. If these tribes alone had the Egyptian experience and were at first the sole guardians of the Egyptian tradition, when once they had come to regard Joseph as their ancestor it would be natural for many stories to cluster about his name. In this connection it is an interesting fact that several of the stories told of Joseph are almost identical with other stories and facts which archæological research have brought to light, but which in their original setting are connected with other names. The chief of these are the following:

1. The story of Joseph's temptation by Potiphar's wife is strikingly parallel to the tale of two brothers—a tale in which the younger brother is subjected by his sister-in-law to the same temptation as Joseph, and, when, like Joseph, he repulses her, she professes to have been outraged by him, and plunges him into misfortune.¹¹ This story comes to us in a papyrus dated in the reign of Seti II., 1209–1205 B.C., and is accordingly very old.

2. The career of Joseph as ruler of Egypt is paralleled by the career of Dûdu or David, an official bearing a Semitic name, who seems to have held a high position under Amenophis IV. of the eighteenth Egyptian dynasty, before 1350 B.C. In the El-Amarna correspondence two letters addressed to this Dûdu by Aziru, king of the Amorites, occur. They tell their own tale, and are as follows:

⁷ See Paton's article, "Israel's Conquest of Canaan," *Journal of Biblical Literature*, XXXII, 1–54.

⁸ See Breasted's "Ancient Records, Egypt," III., § 617.

⁹ Ex. 3: 13, 14.

¹⁰ I Sam. 3 and 4.

¹¹ See Petrie's "Egyptian Tales," second series, London, 1895, 36 ff.

I.¹²

¹To Dûdu, my lord, my father, ²speaks Aziru, thy son, thy servant: ³at the feet of my father I fall. ⁴Unto my father may there be health! ⁵O Dûdu truly I have done ⁶the wish of the king, my lord, ⁷and whatever is the wish ⁸of the king, my lord, let him send ⁹and I will do it. ¹⁰Further: see, thou art there, ¹¹my father, and whatever is the wish ¹²of Dûdu, my father, send it ¹³and I will do it. ¹⁴Behold thou art my father ¹⁵and my lord and I am thy son. The lands of the Amorites ¹⁶are thy lands, and my house is thy house, ¹⁷and whatever thy wish is, ¹⁸send, and I ¹⁹shall behold and verily will do it. ²⁰And see, thou in the presence of ²¹the king, my lord sittest. ²². . . enemies ²³words of slander ²⁴before my father, before ²⁵the king, my lord, have spoken, ²⁶but do thou not count them just! ²⁷And behold thou in the presence ²⁸of the king, my lord, as a dignitary (?) ²⁹sittest . . . ³⁰and the words of slander ³¹against me do not count as true. ³²Also I am a servant of the king, my lord, ³³and from the words of the king, my lord, ³⁴and from the words of Dûdu, my father, ³⁵I shall not depart forever. ³⁶But when the king, my lord does not love me, ³⁷but hates me, ³⁸then I—what shall I say?

II.¹³

¹To Dûdu, my lord, my father, ²speaks Aziru, thy servant: ³at the feet of my lord I fall. ⁴Khatib has come ⁵and has brought the words ⁶of the king, my lord, important and good, ⁷and I am very, very glad, ⁸and my lands and my brethren, ⁹the servants of the king, my lord, ¹⁰and the servants of Dûdu, my lord, ¹¹are very, very glad ¹²when there comes ¹³the breath of the king, my lord, ¹⁴unto me. From the words ¹⁵of my lord, my god, my sun god, ¹⁶and from the words of Dûdu, ¹⁷my lord, I shall not depart. ¹⁸My lord, truly Khatib ¹⁹stands with me. ²⁰I and he will come. ²¹My lord, the king of the Hittites ²²has come into Nukhashshi, ²³so that I cannot come. ²⁴Would that the king of the Hittites would depart! ²⁵then, truly, I would come, ²⁶I and Khatib. ²⁷May the king, my lord, my words ²⁸hear! My lord, I fear ²⁹on account of the face of the king, my lord, ³⁰and on account of the face of Dûdu. ³¹And now by my gods ³²and my messengers verily I have sworn, ³³O Dûdu and nobles ³⁴of the king, my lord, that truly I will come. ³⁵And so, Dûdu ³⁶and the king, my lord, and the nobles, ³⁷truly we will not concieve anything ³⁸against Aziru that is unfavorable"—³⁹even thus may ye swear by ⁴⁰my gods and the god A'. ⁴¹And truly I ⁴²and Khatib are faithful servants of the king. ⁴³O Dûdu, thou shalt truly know ⁴⁴that I will come to thee.

In these letters Aziru constantly classes Dûdu with the king. He fears to offend Dûdu as he fears to offend the king. The words of Dûdu he counts as of equal importance to those of the king. Dûdu

¹² Winckler & Abel, "Thoutafelnfund von El-Amarna," No. 40 and Knudtson's "Die El-Amarna Tafeln," No. 158.

¹³ Winckler & Abel, No. 38 and Knudtson, No. 164.

clearly occupied a position of power with the king similar to that ascribed to Joseph in Genesis.

3. The action of Joseph in storing up corn and then distributing it during a time of famine is paralleled by the course of Baba of El-Kab, who flourished under the eighteenth dynasty of Egypt about 1500 B.C., and who says in an inscription carved in his tomb, at the close of a description of the activities of his life:

“I collected corn as a friend of the harvest-god. I was watchful in time of sowing. And when a famine arose, lasting many years, I distributed corn to the city each year of the famine.”¹⁴

The principal features of Joseph's life are thus paralleled in ancient history. The careers of Baba and Dûdu are thoroughly historical; our knowledge of them rests upon contemporary documents. While the latter part of the tale of the two brothers contains much that is mythical, the portion which deals with the brother's wife is so natural, and presents such a vivid picture of Egyptian rural life, that there can be little doubt that it is based on a real incident.

When once a name has become prominent in a nation it tends, by a law of human nature, to gather to itself all the appropriate stories known. One heard at Harvard a generation ago stories told of the late Professor Andrew P. Peabody, which a generation before had been told in Germany of the absent-minded Professor Neander. Before our eyes to-day stories are attaching themselves to Colonel Roosevelt which originally were told of others. It is not too much to suppose that the stories known to us from the sources quoted attached themselves to the name of Joseph, and thus filled out to the later Israelites the figure of their shadowy patriarch. This supposition, confirmed by historical and legendary analogies, enables us to find in the Joseph stories real history. It is not, it must be confessed, the history of a real Hebrew patriarch, but it is real history of Egypt and Palestine and of real men in them. The history is recovered, too, by following historical methods and following historical analogies, and relieves us from the necessity of supposing with Winckler that Joseph is but a series of Tammuz myths, or with Jensen, that he is a group of Gilgamesh myths.

¹⁴ Cf. Brugsch, “Egypt under the Pharaohs,” London, 1881, I., 303 ff.

Our pursuit of the origin of the Joseph-stories has taken us far afield from the discussion of the tribal history of the patriarchs. The accounts of the marriages of the sons of Judah and of an episode in the life of Judah himself in Genesis 38 may easily be understood to be alliances made by that tribe with clans previously living in their territory. Judah in all the subsequent history stood apart from the other Hebrew tribes. That she formed in David's early reign and after the time of Solomon a separate kingdom was in part due to the larger element of Canaanite blood in her.

Similarly the story in Genesis 34 of Simeon and Levi¹⁵ represents an unsuccessful and treacherous attack of those tribes on the ancient city. In this attack they were practically annihilated and their kinsmen regarded their punishment as just.¹⁶ On the view that the patriarchal stories are adumbrations of tribal history, the traditions which ascribe the birth of the patriarchs Gad, Asher, Dan and Naphtali to slave mothers may indicate that these tribes joined the Israelitish confederacy later than the union between the two great groups of Leah and Rachel tribes. If this were the case, these tribes probably came into the confederacy after the settlement in Palestine, and were, presumably, Amorite or Canaanite tribes who were there already. In the case of the tribe of Asher this supposition receives some confirmation from documents outside the Old Testament.

The father of Aziru, the Amorite, who wrote the letters to Dûdu quoted above, was named Ebed-Ashera, Ashera being a goddess. Ebed-Ashera in his time was in frequent war with Gebal, whose king, Rib-Adda, complained to the king of Egypt in many letters preserved for us in the El-Amarna correspondence. Rib-Adda sometimes calls the people over whom Ebed-Ashera ruled Amorites (Amurru), sometimes the "men of Ebed-Ashera" and often the

¹⁵ The story appears in two forms; one is by J and the other by a priestly writer. In the former Shechem appears on one side and Simeon and Levi on the other; Shechem violates Dinah and the brothers take terrible vengeance upon him. In the latter Hamor, the father of Shechem proposes honorable marriage for his son with Dinah, and all the sons of Jacob are represented as acting as one man. Cf. Carpenter and Harford-Battersby, "Hexateuch," 52 ff.

¹⁶ Gen. 49: 5-7.

“sons of Ebed-Ashera.” It would be easy in course of time for the Ebed to drop out and the tribe to be called “sons of Ashera” or “sons of Asher.”¹⁷ As this tribe in the period covered by the El-Amarna correspondence (1400–1350 B.C.) was in the same region in which the Hebrew tribe of Asher was afterward settled, it seems probable that the Hebrew tribe was the same as the earlier Amorite tribe. This would fit in well with the conclusion to which the tribal interpretation of Jacob’s marriage points.

When the investigation moves back a generation in the patriarchal genealogies, the same principle holds, but new perplexities appear. It is clear that Esau is the personification of the Edomite nation, and Israel that of the nucleus of the Hebrews. Already in the time of Merneptah there was an Israel, which was a nation. Probably it consisted of the Leah tribes. But the Hebrew patriarch is also called Jacob, and most of the stories concerning him are told of him as Jacob. There is reason to believe that the name Jacob had an origin similar to the name Joseph.

In the reign of the Babylonian king, Apil-Sin (2161–2144 B.C.), two witnesses to a contract, Shubna-ilu and Yadakh-ilu gave the name of their father as *Yakub-ilu* or Jacob-el.¹⁸ Another witness, Lamaz, had a Jacob-el as his father.¹⁹ In the reign of the next king, Sin-muballit (2143–2124 B.C.), a witness named Nur-Shamasli was the son of *Yakub-ilu*, or Jacob-el,²⁰ while another witness, Sinerbiam, gave his father’s name simply *Yakub*, or Jacob.²¹ Seven hundred years later Thothmes III. records among the names of cities which he conquered in Palestine a city *Ya’ke-b’-ra*,²² the Egyptian equivalent of Jacob-el. The probability is that some Babylonian who bore the name migrated to the west, and in course of time

¹⁷ See, *c. g.*, Schrader’s “Keilinschriftliche Bibliothek,” Nos. 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 59, 60, 62, 63, 64, 68, 69, 70, 71, 73, 75, 76, 77, 78, 83, 84, 86, 88, 91, 92, 101.

¹⁸ “Cuneiform Texts, etc., in the British Museum,” IV., 33, 22b.

¹⁹ Meissner, “Altbabylonische Privatrecht,” 36, 25.

²⁰ “Cuneiform Texts,” VIII, 25, 22.

²¹ “Cuneiform Texts,” II., 8, 26.

²² *Mitteilungen der vorderasiatische Gesellschaft*, 1907., p. 27.

The city seems to have been east of the Jordan and was, perhaps, the same as Penuel, Gen. 32: 31.

a city was named after him. Later, when the Hebrews settled near this city, they took over the name of its hero in shortened form as a name for their eponymous ancestor. All the reasons quoted above for the name Joseph apply here. Apart from stories of marriages and friction with Esau, which denote tribal relations, the one important tale connected with Jacob is his dream at Bethel. This was one of the stories by which the Hebrews justified to themselves their adoption of an old Canaanitish shrine. The stories of Isaac seem, in like manner, to be tales of alliance with Aramaeans, and tales of shrines like that at Beersheba. We have no extra Biblical material with which to compare them.

When the investigator takes up the stories of Abraham, moving back still a generation from the nation Israel, he is confronted with much material and with a wealth of conflicting theories. Of course to Jensen Abraham is a form of the Gilgamesh myth.²³ To Winckler and Zimmern Abraham is a moon god. The reasons for this latter view have seemed convincing to many. Abram, of which Abraham was but a variant form, has been held to be of West Semitic origin and to mean "exalted father."²⁴ It is really, as we shall see, of Babylonian origin and has another meaning. Tradition connects him with Harran and Ur, both seats of the worship of the moon god. In Babylonian hymns Sin, the moon god, is frequently called *Ab* or father.²⁵ Sarah or Sarai, the name of Abraham's wife, is the Hebrew equivalent of *šarratu*, "queen," an epithet of the consort of the moon god at Harran. Milcah, Abraham's sister-in-law (Gen. 11: 29), is *Malkatu*, the name of a consort of the sun god and perhaps also of the moon god.²⁶ These are some of the arguments which seem to the adherents of this view conclusive. It must be confessed that many of the stories told of Abraham in Genesis are connected with shrines, and would be explicable on this view. Their purpose was undoubtedly to justify the use by Hebrews of the shrines of Shechem, Bethel, Hebron, and Beersheba. This is not, however, the whole of the matter. We have now evidence that

²³ "Gilgameshepos und der Weltliteratur," I., 256 ff.

²⁴ Briggs, Brown and Driver, "Hebrew Lexicon," 4.

²⁵ Cf. *Journal of Biblical Literature*, XXVIII., p. 166, n. 26.

²⁶ Schrader, "Keilinschriften und das Alte Testament," 3d ed., 364 ff.

Abraham was in Babylonia a personal name. This evidence comes from Dilbad, a little place about eight miles south of Borsippa, and consists of some contracts in which an Abraham figures. Three of the documents are here translated:

I.²⁷

¹I ox, broken to the yoke, ²an ox of Ibni-Sin son of Sin-imgurani, ³from Ibni-Sin ⁴through the agency of Kishti-Nabium, ⁵son of Eteru, ⁶Abarama, son of Awel-Ishtar, ⁷for 1 month has hired. ⁸For 1 month ⁹1 shekel of silver ¹⁰he will pay. ¹¹Of it $\frac{1}{2}$ shekel of silver ¹²from the hand of ¹³Abarama ¹⁴Kishti-Nabium ¹⁵has received.

The names of the witnesses then follow and the date, which is the 11th year of Ammizadugga, or 1967 B. C.

II.²⁸

¹To the patrician ²speak ³saying, Gimil-Marduk (wishes that) ⁴Shamash and Marduk may give thee health! ⁵Mayest thou have peace, mayest thou have health! ⁶May the god who protects thee ⁷keep thy head in good luck! (To inquire) ⁸concerning thy health I am sending. ⁹May thy welfare before Shamash and Marduk ¹⁰be eternal! ¹¹Concerning the 400 *shars* of land, the field of Sin-idinam, ¹²which to Abarama, ¹³to lease, thou hast sent; ¹⁴the land-steward and scribe ¹⁵appeared and ¹⁶on behalf of Sin-idinam ¹⁷I took that up. ¹⁸The 400 *shars* of land to Abarama ¹⁹as thou hast directed ²⁰I have leased. ²¹Concerning thy dispatches I shall not be negligent.

III.²⁹

¹1 shekel of silver, ²the rent of his field ³for the year that Ammizadugga, the king, (set up) ⁴a lordly, splendid statue (*i. e.* Ammizadugga's 13th year), ⁵brought ⁶Abarama; ⁷received (it) ⁸Sin-idinam ⁹and Iddatum. ¹⁰Month Siman, (May-June) 28th day, ¹¹the year Ammizadugga, the king (set up) ¹²a lordly, splendid statue.

These documents are conclusive proof that Abarama, or Abraham, was a personal name in Babylonia. The name apparently meant, "He (*i. e.*, some god) loves the father." The Abraham revealed in these documents was not the patriarch, but was a small farmer in Babylonia. His father was Awel-Ishtar, not Terah; his brother, Iddatum, not Nahor. His existence, however, shows that, just as

²⁷ *Vorderasiatische Schriftdenkmäler der königliche Museen zu Berlin*, VII., No. 92.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, No. 198.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, No. 97.

in the cases of Jacob and Joseph, a living person probably existed far back in history about whose name stories, gathered from various quarters, afterward clustered.

That such a person may have migrated from Babylonia to Palestine, as the Biblical patriarch is said to have done, is clearly attested by an interesting little contract from Sippar, which reads as follows:³⁰

¹A wagon ²from Mannum-balum-Shamash, ³son of Shelibia, ⁴Khabilkinum, ⁵son of Appanibi ⁶on a lease ⁷for 1 year ⁸has hired. ⁹As a yearly rental ¹⁰ $\frac{2}{3}$ of a shekel of silver ¹¹he shall pay. ¹²As the first of the rent ¹³ $\frac{1}{6}$ of a shekel of silver ¹⁴he has received. ¹⁵Unto the land of Kittim ¹⁶he shall not drive it. (After the names of the witnesses comes the date.) ²²Month Ulul, day 25th, ²³the year the king as a friend protected Erech from the flood of the river.

The date of this interesting document has not been identified with certainty, but it probably comes from the reign of Shamsuiluna (2080-2043 B.C.). The country Kittim mentioned in it is the Mediterranean coast, which was sometimes so called by the Hebrews (cf. Isa. 2: 10, and Eze. 27: 6). The interesting thing is that intercourse between the Babylonian city of Sippar and the Mediterranean coast was so frequent when this contract was made, that a man could not lease his wagon for a year without running the risk that it might be driven to the Mediterranean coast lands. It was in a period of such frequent intercourse that some Joseph-el and Jacob-el migrated from Babylonia and gave their names to Palestinian cities. And it would seem that some Babylonian Abraham may have done the same, for Sheshonk I., of the twenty-second Egyptian dynasty (the Shishak of the Bible), records as one of the places captured by him in Palestine a place called "The field of Abram."³¹ This place would seem to have been in southern Judah. It would seem quite as likely that a Babylonian Abraham may have given his name to the place in the same way that a Jacob-el and a Joseph-el did, and that, after Hebrews had settled in the country, they took his name over, just as they did the other two, as to suppose that the name Abraham originated in an epithet of a moon god.

One cannot well refuse to believe that many of the stories con-

³⁰ See *Beitrag zur Assyriologie*, V., p. 488, No. 23; cf. p. 429 ff.

³¹ See Breasted, "Ancient Records, Egypt," IV., 352, 353.

nected with Abraham grew up in Palestine around certain shrines. They were the instruments by which Israel justified her use of these shrines. Other stories, like that in Genesis 18, 19, arose as the explanation of natural phenomena, such as the existence of the impressive gorge of the Dead Sea, and probably in their earliest form had no connection with Abraham. One can hardly believe, in view of all the evidence presented, that Abraham was the real ancestor of all the peoples said to be descended from him, any more than he can believe that all Egyptians were descended from one, Mizraim, but it is no longer unthinkable that the stories collected about Abraham have been attached to the name of a real man, who once migrated from Babylonia.

This paper cannot conclude without some remarks about the historical character of the fourteenth chapter of Genesis. Critics agree that it does not belong to either of the four great documents of the Hexateuch, and a considerable unanimity of critical opinion has been reached in recent decades, that it is later than all of them, and that it is a kind of Jewish midrash of a thoroughly unhistorical character. On the other hand, a large group of conservative scholars have endeavored to show from Babylonian texts that it is real history—history the authenticity of which is confirmed by the monuments. What are the facts as they appear to an unprejudiced mind? They are as follows:

Hammurapi, the great Babylonian lawgiver, one of the most important of all the Babylonian kings, reigned from 2123 to 2081 B.C., and claimed sovereignty of *Mar-tu*, or the Westland, probably Syria and Palestine. Many scholars have held that Hammurapi was the same as Amraphel of Gen. 14: 1. The names would exactly correspond were it not for the *l* at the end of Amraphel. By no known philological equivalence does that letter belong there, and if Hammurapi is intended by Amraphel, Gen. 14 must have been written so late that the name had become corrupted in a way similar to the corruption from which good Hebrew names have suffered in the angelic lists of the Ethiopic Enoch.³²

³² See the writer's article, "Origin of the names of Angels and Demons in the Extra-Canonical Apocalyptic Literature to 100 A. D." in *Journal of Biblical Literature*, XXXI., 156 ff.

Arioch, king of Elassar (Gen. 14: 1), has been identified with Rim-Sin, king of Larsa, a contemporary of the latter part of the reign of Hammurapi. But the fact is the name of Rim-Sin could not even in Sumerian possibly be read Ari-aku. That of his brother, Arad-Sin, might be so read, but there is nothing to lead us to suppose that it was, and there is no evidence that either Arad-Sin or Rim-Sin were ever in friendly alliance with Hammurapi.³³

Again, much has been made of the fact that Kudur-Mabug, the father of Arad-Sin and Rim-Sin, who was the "Ad-da" or ruler of Emutbal, a district of western Elam, calls himself "Ad-da" of *Mar-tu*,³⁴ which has been supposed to be Palestine. *Mar-tu*, however, simply meant the place of sunset, and probably in this inscription refers to the western part of Elam.³⁵ There is really nothing whatever to connect Kudur-Mabug with Palestine at all. And even if there were, his name is not Cherdorlaomar, so that again the inscription would be evidence of the lack of information on the part of the Biblical writer.

Much has been made by Professors Sayce³⁶ and Hommel of four documents published by Pinches in the *Transactions of the Victoria Institute*, XXIX., 82 ff., which, according to Sayce and Pinches, contain the names of Arioch, Cherdorlaomar, and Tidal, the three kings, who in Gen. 14: 1 are associated with Amraphel. The documents are written in Semitic and are from the Persian period, not earlier than the fourth century B.C.

In reality neither the names Cherdorlaomar nor Arioch appear in the text. The name read Kudurlakhmal is really *Ku-ku-ku-mal* or *Ku-dur-ku-mal*. The other reading is only obtained by giving to the sign *ku* a value, *lakh*, altogether unattested by the cuneiform literature. The name read Eri-eaku and identified with Arioch is spelled in two ways. If read as Sumerian, it might be Eri-eaku. The text in which it occurs is, however, Semitic, and it is probable that the name is to be read here in Semitic fashion. So read it

³³ Cf. *Journal of Biblical Literature*, XXVIII., 158 ff.

³⁴ "Cuneiform Texts," XXI., 33.

³⁵ See Price, Decennial Publications of the University of Chicago, V., 167 ff.

³⁶ Cf. PSBA. XXVIII., 203-218, 241-251; XXIX., 7-17. Cf. also King, "Letters and Inscriptions of Hammurabi," I., p. li ff.

becomes Arad-malkua, or Arad-malaku. Tudkhula, the supposed Tidal, is not called in the document a king at all. To identify him with "Tidal, king of the nations," is a purely fanciful procedure.

It should be noted that in the documents which record these names Arad-malaku, the supposed Eri-aku, takes no part in the wars described; it is his son, Dursil-ilâni (who, by the way, has a good Semitic name) who is represented as the contemporary of Kukukumal, the supposed Cherdorlaomar. It should be further noted, that these documents represent a complete conquest of Babylon by Elam—a conquest so complete that:

"In their faithful counsel unto Kukukumal, king of Elam,
They [the gods] established the fixed advance, which to them seemed good.
"In Babylon, the city of the gods, Marduk set his [Kukukumal's] throne,
All, even the Sodomites of the plundered temples, obey him.
Ravens build their nests; birds dwell [therein];
The ravens croak(?), shrieking they hatch their young [in it].
To the dog crunching the bone the Lady . . . is favorable.
The snake hisses, the evil one spits poison."

This quotation from the second of the documents published by Pinches describes a complete subjugation and desolation of Babylon by Kukukumal, king of Elam. This definitely excludes the possibility that Kukukumal could have acted in harmony with Hammurapi, as Cherdorlaomar is said to have done. Indeed, it shows that he was not a contemporary of Hammurapi at all, for during his powerful reign there was no such conquest of Babylon by Elam. There were many conquests of Babylonia by the Elamites, and this must refer to some other period. In the documents themselves there is evidence that another period is intended, for Babylon is called by its Cassite name, Kar-duniash, a name that it did not bear until three or four hundred years after Hammurapi.

If the fourteenth chapter of Genesis was influenced at all by these documents, it is only another proof that the critics have been right, and that the chapter is not an authority as history.